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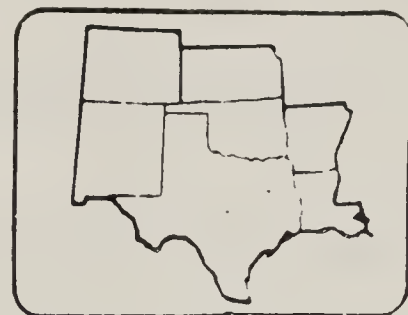
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SOUTHWEST REGIONAL INFORMATION OFFICE

FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY SERVICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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USDA Revises Grade Standards for Canned Freestone Peaches

Reserve In keeping with its efforts to standardize grade names for canned and frozen fruits and vegetables, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has revised the U.S. grade standards for canned freestone peaches. The standards also establish a new grading procedure for the product.

U.S. grades A, B and C will be retained as the official grade names for canned freestone. To simplify the names, however, the descriptive terms, fancy, choice and standard, will be dropped as alternate quality grade names.

"Our long-range goal is to help consumers make informed choices by having a simple set of sequential, single-letter grades for processed fruits and vegetables," Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Carol Tucker Foreman said.

The new grading procedure is based on a system which uses four defect categories: minor, major, severe and critical. For each grade, limits are set on the number of permissible defects in each category.

This system offers packers better control over the finished product's quality. Using the new method, official graders can give reports on the quality of a lot at various stages of production, without having to wait until the end of a shift to determine whether a lot meets a specific grade.

Under the former grading system, the finished product was numerically scored on a number of quality factors. The grade was an average of these scores.

The new system, called attributes sampling, was adopted as the official grading method for canned clingstone peaches in 1978, after a USDA study of the method used in 10 California packing plants.

The revised grade standards for canned freestones was published in the June 22 Federal Register.

USDA's Food Safety and Quality Service establishes grade standards and provides official grading for many food products. Use of the standards and grading services is voluntary, and is paid for by the users. .

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